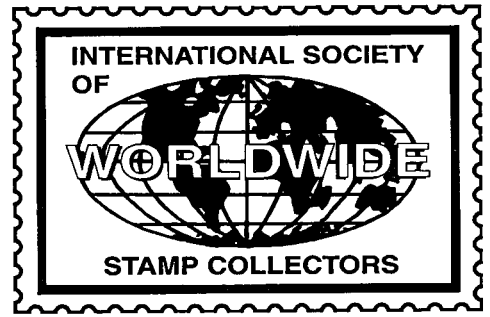


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The Circuit



Affiliate of: APS (#153) & ATA (#89)

www.iswsc.org

July/August 2002 • Volume 20 No. 4

The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors

Documentation of Case of Loss of ISWSC Member's Property

by Anthony Zollo, MD (#856)
Past President, ISWSC
March 8, 2002

The International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors (ISWSC), APS Affiliate #151, has been running a catalog basis exchange of stamps for a number of years called the OMNI Exchange. Tragically, one of our exchange managers, Jerry Foster, died in late April 2001. His family from Texas was settling his affairs, which included his stamp collection and what he had of the OMNI Exchange books.

In May 2001, Jerry's daughter, Melinda Hart packed up what was believed to be his holdings of ISWSC member material and shipped it to me. I then forwarded the material to Jerry's successor, Jim Millette. In reviewing the documentation of ISWSC OMNI inventory, it was clear to Jim that quite a lot was missing.

Jerry's daughter was informed of the discrepancy, and returned to her late father's South Carolina home in early August 2001. On August 10, we received a shipment of more books. However, 380 books were still missing with a total catalog value of over \$41,000, which — as ISWSC president at the time — I was made aware of on August 30.

The following day, what looked like the complete stock of missing books appeared on eBay for auction by a man in Orlando, Florida. The lot listing was worrisome because some of the pages showed stamps missing without a member's mark on the spaces. This meant that even if all 380 books were present, a number of stamps may have been removed.

I immediately sent emails to the lot's owner, eBay management and all bidders requesting that the lot be removed from the auction. After sending several emails to the seller — who refused to give his last

name, address or phone number — to no avail, I gave him my phone number. I received a phone call from a man named Cyril, who was apparently a dealer who obtained the lot from a buyer. He said that he was unaware the books were misappropriated. He was suspicious of the ISWSC claim, but after I gave him numbers, contents and values of some of the missing books, he took the lot off the auction block.

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Cyril had many lots for sale online, so obviously this is a major business for him. As I was working in my clinic at this time and could not speak at length, Cyril and I agreed to speak in the evening. He promised to call after 6pm Central time. When I did not receive a call back, I left two voicemail messages and an

email request for communication.

On the evening of August 31, I called the Police Department in North Augusta, SC, and was informed that to file a claim and begin an investigation someone must appear IN PERSON with supporting documents. This would be a great burden to our all-volunteer society, but we started looking for a member to take on this task. The same evening, I also spoke with Jerry Foster's daughter, Melinda Hart, who was now in the process of relocating to West Virginia. She said that on August 8th she had sold her father's entire stamp collection to Barry and Randy Savedow who run a company called The Browse House in Florida. She stated that there were no ISWSC OMNI Exchange books in the lot she sold them, but added that they carried out boxes of stamps

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OFFICERS, MANAGERS & SERVICE CONTACTS

President: Randy Smith (#1111)

P.O. Box 21115
Eagan, MN 55121-0115 – USA
rasmmary4@earthlink.net

Executive Director & Immediate Past President (Board Member):

Anthony Zollo, MD (#856)
P.O. Box 15047
Lufkin, TX 75915-0407 – USA
zolloam@lcc.net

Secretary: Joanne Berkowitz (#98)

125 43rd Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-2101 – USA
joannebe@pacbell.net

Vice President for Charitable Services:

Mike Crump (#2126)
P.O. Box 57
Yorba Linda, CA 92885-0057 – USA
StampGuy47@aol.com

Vice President for Public Relations:

Tom Fortunato (#379)
42 Maynard St.
Rochester, NY 14615-2022 – USA
stampmf@frontiernet.net

ISWSC Board:

Joan Roderick (#669)
12 Red Oak Road
Asheville, NC 28804 – USA
jnroderick@earthlink.net

ISWSC Board: Ken Costilow (#142)

Virginia Beach, VA – USA
kcos32@cox.net

Immediate Past Secretary (Board Member): Dalene Thomas (#101)

8612 W. Warren Lane
Lakewood, CO 80227-2352 – USA
dalene1@wideopenwest.com

AUCTION

Manager: Everett King (#1389)

P.O. Box 127
Whitethorn, CA 94586 – USA
Ph: 707-986-7230
stamps@whitethorn.com

WHATZIT? COORDINATOR

Manager: John D. Pruitt (#121)

1151 George Road
Meadowbrook, PA 19046-1109 – USA
Fax: 215-947-7305
jdupruitt@comcast.net

SALES CIRCUIT

Manager (U.S.):

James M. Gaul (#1853)
1920 Fawn Lane
Hellertown, PA 18055 – USA
terrynjim@enter.net

OMNI CIRCUIT

Manager: Jim Millette (#1314)

8901 Marcel Cadieux (#207)
Montreal, PQ H2M 2L9 – CANADA
jmillett@globetrotter.net

Co-Manager: David Paul (#59)

2 Heritage Drive
Belchertown, MA 01007 – USA

Co-Manager:

Thomas Pomaski (#410)
stamper10@earthlink.net

SWAP CIRCUIT

Coordinator: Randy Smith (#1111)

P.O. Box 21115
Eagan, MN 55121-0115 – USA
rasmmary4@earthlink.net

Phone or send your questions to the appropriate volunteer. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope or IRC for a reply.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Represent the ISWSC, distribute stamps to youth programs in their region.

Australasia: Noel Routley (#1610)

C/- Post Office
Redesdale, 3444 – AUSTRALIA
routley@netcon.net.au

British Isles: Karen Rose (#584)

47 Heron Road — Oldbury
West Midlands B68 8AG
GREAT BRITAIN – U.K.

Canada: William Silvester (#1058)

378C Cotlow Road
Victoria, BC V9C 2G1 – CANADA
wgsilvester@shaw.ca

Cuba: Adrian Portuondo (#952)

Apartado 9009
Santiago 90900 – CUBA

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jennifer Arnold
310 NW Juniper Lane
Albany, OR 97321 – USA
Ph: 541-967-7043
Fax: 541-967-9515
pizzazz@cmug.com

SWAP CIRCUIT MANAGERS

According to the first initial of your last name.

Regular (A–I) Circuit:

Scott Sadger (#882)
2140 Miller Road
Buchanan, MI 49107 – USA

Regular (J–Z) Circuit:

Randy Smith (#1111)
P.O. Box 21115
Eagan, MN 55121-0115
rasmmary4@earthlink.net

Super Circuit:

William Silvester (#1058)
378C Cotlow Road
Victoria, BC V9C 2G1 – CANADA
wgsilvester@shaw.ca

CTO Circuit:

William Silvester (#1058)
378C Cotlow Road
Victoria, BC V9C 2G1 – CANADA
wgsilvester@shaw.ca

Small (Definitives) Circuit:

Kenneth Wills (#2150)
5308 Shadow Glen Drive
Grapevine, TX 76051 – USA
wills@airmail.net

Eastern Europe: Jan Szyrka (#539)

ul.Srebrna 29
PL-44121 Gliwice – POLAND
szyrka@zeus.polsl.gliwice.pl

Scandinavia/Baltics:

Martti Vihanto (#830)
P.O. Box 34
FIN-20521, Turku – FINLAND

Western Europe:

Alan Horwedel (#796)
CMR 477, Box 160
APO, AE 09154-0288 – USA
Akazienweg 10
D-74321 Bietigheim-Bissingen
GERMANY
ahorwedel@hotmail.com

Please remember that the Editor does not mail out The Circuit. If you have any questions about your Circuit mail service, please contact Randy Smith, Tom Fortunato or Tony Zollo. Thank you!

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE:

JULY 20, 2002

President's Column

by Randy Smith (#1111)
ISWSC President

As you read this column, it will probably be close to the Fourth of July. But, because of lead times necessary to prepare, print and mail the newsletter, I am writing this column on Memorial Day. For Americans, the two holidays tie naturally together, however. On both occasions, I salute all who have or are serving in their nation's armed forces.

In addition to the reverent nature of the Memorial Day holiday, in the United States, the long weekend is also known as the traditional "start of summer". Within a few short days, school will be over, making way for the long summer break.

Here in the Midwest, the weekend pilgrimages to lakeshore cabins and favorite fishing spots has already begun, despite the cooler than normal temperatures. (Okay, its true that Minnesota has the image of being cold, but you have to admit that having it snow here in May is a bit ridiculous!!)

In my town, summer sports such as baseball and soccer are in full swing. My six-year-old son, in his

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New British Isles Regional Representative Appointed

Karen Rose has stepped up to serve the ISWSC as Regional Rep. for the British Isles. We are glad to have her helping us out in this capacity. Karen has collected worldwide stamps for over twenty years and has been a member of the ISWSC for about ten years now.

Other interests include reading, gardening and computer games. Karen doesn't work outside her home due to a disability, but she does spend a lot of time helping her mother with household tasks, as her parents are also disabled.

Karen says that she will do her best to be a good regional representative and will try to increase membership in our society.



Dues/Advertising Policy

Dues Information:

Single/Dealer/Club membership: \$12.00*

Youth membership (under 18): \$10.00*

Family membership (up to 4 persons in one residence): \$19.00*

*Plus 250 large commemoratives for the Youth Program or equiv. donation in US\$. Dues above are for one year and include six newsletters per year. You may sign up for three years at a time. For an application or further information send SASE or IRC to: ISWSC, P.O. Box 150407, Lufkin TX 75915-0407, USA. *There will be a \$2 per year discount if the renewal is received at least one month prior to the current expiration date.*

Advertising Policy:

For reasons of accountability, only members of the ISWSC, APS or ASDA may place ads. All ads dealing with philatelic concerns are acceptable. We reserve the right to edit out objectionable language. Advertisers are expected to respond to all inquiries, so be sure you can handle the responses before you offer to trade, buy or sell. If you have a bad result from answering an ad, contact the Editor. We will try to resolve the conflict.

Display Rates (Camera Ready*) per insertion:

Full page: \$75.00**

Half page: \$40.00**

Quarter page: \$20.00**

Per column inch: \$5.00

Six repeat insertions of the same ad for the cost of five ads (one free). We will also offer a two-sided insertion for \$125 per issue.

*Camera Ready means ready to paste up or scan and print. Reductions and typesetting extra.

** Discounts for three or more insertions of same ad. Yearly display rates available. Write to ISWSC past president Tom Fortunato (see p. 2) for special rates.

Classified Rates per insertion:

First 30 words, including name, address, and ZIP code are \$3. Additional words are 20 for \$1.

NOTE: State abbreviations = one word; "P.O. Box 1234" = two words; ZIP code = one word.

Make all checks payable to ISWSC in U.S. funds. Send text and payment for ads to the Editor. All addresses can be found on page 2.

President's Message

Continued from page 1

second year of T-ball (baseball), is working on the fundamentals of the game and learning what it means to be part of a team. This reminds me of the old adage, "There's no I (individual) in TEAM." But is there in the ISWSC?

The ISWSC is much like a team — we all must work together to ensure the success of the society. But, because our society is dispersed throughout the world, the ISWSC relies much more on the individual work of its members to ensure the society's success. Like a team, however, if everyone performs a role, the team will flourish. I am grateful for all who volunteer and keep the "I" in our society!

However, there's another "I" in the ISWSC that I'm concerned about. That "I" is the first word of our society's name — international. Using the mailing statistics for this issue of *The Circuit*, our membership has fallen to 423. Of that number, only 54 members

live outside the USA (21 in Canada, 33 elsewhere). Without a concerted effort to attract and retain international members, we may be in danger of losing the "I" in our society's name!

While the decline in our membership (both domestically and internationally) is a trend all too familiar to many philatelic organizations, it doesn't make it acceptable! Each of us must do our part to reverse the trend. This can be done by introducing your local stamp club to the ISWSC, making ISWSC applications available at local stamp shows, inviting your non-ISWSC stamp friends to join us, writing articles for other stamp publications (mentioning the ISWSC, of course!), etc.

If each of us takes personal responsibility for attracting new members to our society, I am confident that we can reverse this trend. Doing so may just save the "I" in our name, too!

Happy stamping and remember — introduce someone to the ISWSC!



OMNI Loss

Continued from page 1

from her father's house without direct supervision and could have (deliberately or mistakenly) removed the ISWSC material.

On September 1, I received a phone call from Cyril who, after several requests, told me his full name is Cyril Javurek and he is located in Florida. He told me he did purchase the lot from The Browse House. Thus far, he had cooperated by removing the lot from eBay auction and promised to hold the stamps until the matter was resolved. Although he appeared to now believe the claim that these stamps belong to ISWSC members, he had so far declined to give me his address, or to return the stamps to us (even despite an offer of a \$500 "reward").

I informed Cyril that the ISWSC is insured by Collectibles Insurance Agency (CIA) and that we would be filing a claim when they reopen for business on September 4, 2001. Cyril stated that he used the same company and in fact knows the owner, Dan Walker, who might serve as an intermediary to help in the return of our stamps. So, we agreed to speak again the following Tuesday evening (September

**I again
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4th). I again requested his address and he declined to give it over the phone, stating he would send it in an email message (which I never received).

I contacted ISWSC members living in the N. Augusta, South Carolina, area hoping to find a volunteer to appear in person to file a complaint with the N. Augusta Police Dept. My major concern was the return of the material from Cyril and the filing of a claim for any stamps still missing. The expense and inconvenience of making a trip to N. Augusta would be best avoided, if possible. However, whatever the cost, the ISWSC planned on pursuing this issue and taking any action needed to recover the members' property and secure reimbursement for any stamps that prove to be permanently lost.

A documented account of what happened (basically, everything before this paragraph) was emailed to the CIA on September 3rd. The missing OMNI exchange books — valued at \$41,171.11 — were reported by Mr. Ephraim (Duke) Day of the APS Stamp Theft Committee to the North Augusta, SC, Public Safety Department (case #2001-02256I). Lt. Vern Sadler #13 of that agency took the "Lost/Missing Property" report on September 3rd. No investigation was to take place at the time, pending further developments. Cyril was informed of the report and the case number via email.

On September 5, I spoke over the telephone with Dan Walker of CIA. He stated he had called both Cyril

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OMNI Loss

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and The Browse House and was told that the lot of OMNI books, housed in two boxes, was part of the collection sold to them by Melinda Hart. They said they removed about 20 books, took out the stamps from those books and the stamps are now irretrievable. They also removed some stamps from some of the remaining books, which are also irretrievable.

The remainder of the books was sold to Cyril as part of a larger lot. Dan then asked Cyril for a count and inventory of what he now has in his possession.

He said they found a total of 310 books recovered, which meant there were 70 books completely missing.

Dan said he would call me when the list is completed. I told him I had received the inventory of all that was missing from Jim Millette and offered to send it to him.

I was now fairly confident that we would eventually get back all the material in Cyril's possession.

On September 10, I spoke again with Dan Walker. He said he hoped to have the inventory from Cyril in a day

or two. Once he had possession of the material, he would turn it over to an insurance adjuster and begin the process of recovery. In other words, things were moving along — albeit slowly — and the process would take time.

On September 24, I called Dan Walker who had just returned from a ten day trip. He said he had contacted Shelton Bosley of Leisure Associates who should have been in contact with me. The next day, Dan called me back to say Shelton Bosley did get the OMNI books from Cyril, but had gone on a personal vacation and would not be back until the following week, when I could expect to hear from him.

On October 4, I spoke to Shelton Bosley of Leisure Associates Inc. who was conducting the investigation for the insurance company. He recorded a statement from me over about 40 minutes. As part of the investigation, he requested that we send him a copy of our policy, the inventory of the missing books and the overall OMNI inventory from Jerry Foster (currently in Jim Millette's possession). Taking just under three weeks, the investigation was completed on October 23. Shelton Bosley recorded statements from all parties involved and sent the results of his investigation to the insurance company to make their decision.

On Thursday, January 10, 2002, I received another

Edmonton Stamp Club Says Thank You

John M. Powell, Exhibits & Awards Chairman
ROYAL *2002* ROYALE

Many thanks for sending me two Youth Merit Certificates to have awarded at the 74th Annual Convention of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, hosted by the Edmonton Stamp Club, March 22-24, 2002.

The jury was pleased to award these certificates to the following: Mickey Gombos for "Greek Mythology"; Franciska Yurich for "Sports Played on Different Surfaces".

Many thanks to your society for making the certificates available. Next year we shall be back to hosting our regular Edmonton Spring National Show, March 28-30, 2003.

call from Mr. Bosley. He said that the insurance company attorneys had rendered their opinions and the loss would be covered. He said that he had asked our insurance agent, Dan Walker, to retrieve the remaining books from Cyril, at which time Dan Walker and Mr. Bosley would go through them to compare the contents to Jim Millette's inventory and determine the value of the missing books and stamps. He would call me back when this is complete and then we could expect the return of the books and a check for the material lost.

On January 30, Mr. Bosley called to say that he, Dan Walker and Duke Day had met to examine the booklets received from Cyril and compare them against the inventory from Jim Millette. He said they found a total of 310 books recovered, which meant there were 70 books completely missing. The remaining books, along with a copy of Duke Day's inventory of missing stamps, were shipped to me for verification before the check would be cut.

On February 5, I received the shipment of recovered OMNI books from Mr. Bosley. After going through them to verify their accounting of what was missing, I called him to arrange payment for the missing material.

In early March I signed a "Statement of Loss" and on March 6, I received a check for the value of the missing stamps.

